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National Smokejumper Association

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Smokejumper Obituary

Heintzelman, Jack G. (Cave Junction 1943)

Jack died March 3, 1999, in Seattle. He was the foreman at Cave Junction 1943-1945. From the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base history: "Jack Heintzelman, a young forester, 'experienced as a lookout, administrative guard, member of a 40-man suppression crew and protective assistant,' with 'no past experience at smokejumping,' headed the 1943 Smokejumper Project at Cave Junction." This was the first year of smokejumpers at Cave Junction and the Siskiyou Base was the 2nd or 3rd smokejumper base established in the U.S.

"The first I heard of the project was in the spring of 1943. Supervisor Obye called me and asked if I would like to head the Smokejumper Project to be stationed at Cave Junction. I was the Protective Assistant at the Redwood Ranger Station at the time."

Upon acceptance of the position, Heintzelman was sent to Seeley Lake for training as a rigger, spotter and jumper. "At Seeley Lake, I was assigned 10 men from the CPS (conscientious objectors) crew. These men and I trained under Jim Waite (MSO-40) and Earl Cooley (MSO-40). Frank Derry (MSO-40) was parachute trainer leader. The crew was of very high quality with a variety of skills. After six weeks we returned to Cave Junction." The crew made six fire jumps that season. Jack commented about the good quality of the CPS jumpers in his end-of-season report. For the remaining two years under Heintzelman, the crew was made up of CPS jumpers.

At the end of the 1945 season, Jack was transferred to the Powers R.D. Siskiyou NF. He later was a District Ranger on the Olympic NF, personnel officer in the Forest Service Chief's office, and then served with the agency in its Milwaukee Regional Office.

(end of excerpt)